

NEW YORK TIMES

MAY 15 1964

Europeans Will Help U.S. Develop Research Reactor

**West Germany and Euratom Join A.E.C.
and 17 Utilities to Construct a Fast
Breeder for Studies of Safety**

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 14—European and American nuclear researchers entered into an agreement today to pool efforts in developing a breeder reactor, one that produces more nuclear fuel than it consumes.

In the 20-year history of reactor development, marked more by nationalistic competition than international cooperation, the arrangement for trans-Atlantic cooperation is unusual.

Joining in the project are 17 private utilities in the Midwest and Southwest, the General Electric Company, the Atomic Energy Commission, West Germany's Karlsruhe Research Center and the six-nation European Atomic Energy Community.

The groups will join in building and operating an experimental fast breeder reactor near Fayetteville, Ark., in the Ozarks.

The reactor will "burn" natural uranium and in the process produce heat and atomic fuel

in the form of fissionable plutonium.

Because of its fuel "breeding" capability, this type of reactor is viewed as the most efficient utilizing the fission process.

A critical question to be resolved, however, is the safety of this type of reactor.

The significance of the project, however, is likely to prove more political than technical, in establishing a pattern for international cooperation. The commission and Euratom have cooperated in reactor research, but the Sefor program marks the first direct financial participation of a European group in a reactor project in the United States.

Under a series of contracts signed today at the commission's Washington headquarters, the 17 utilities, banded together into Southwest Atomic

Energy Associates, will pay \$5.9 million of the \$12,350,000 cost of the construction of the reactor.

The Karlsruhe Research Center of the West German Government will pay \$5 million, with 40 per cent of this amount contributed by Euratom. The remaining construction costs will be covered by General Electric.

The commission, in turn, agreed to pay up to \$12.7 million in research and development assistance.

To Share Technology

All technology and patents developed in the project will be made freely available to the reactor industry in this country and abroad.

Euratom already has entered into an arrangement for pooling fast breeder research among its six member nations — Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany.

In the near future, Euratom and the United States are expected to sign a long-delayed agreement for exchange of research results and personnel in the fast-breeder reactor field.

The United States also will supply a substantial amount of plutonium for reactor experiments in West Germany and France.

The Sefor reactor will have a capacity of 20,000 thermal kilowatts, but its heat will not be used to generate electricity. Construction of the reactor — the first large nuclear power experiment in the South-Central region — is expected to take three years.